Use of Scientific Technology for Benefit of Tribal Children

*275. SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD:
DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the various measures which the Department of Science and Technology can take in the area of Melghat Forest of Amravati district of Maharashtra where 4500 children have died due to malnutrition and disease during the last three years and several are likely to die in this rainy season;

(b) in what way can modern science and technology come to the benefit of these tribals; and

(c) what concrete steps will be taken by this department for preventing this great calamity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) to (c) The livelihood of the tribals of Melghat forest region now largely depends on agriculture. One of the reasons of loss in the agriculture production is the absence of scientific water management practices. Therefore, an expert group of the Department of Science & technology has recommended a project titled "Developing livelihood base for tribals in Melghat through watershed development" for implementation in this area. The activivities under this project include diversion drains, field bunding and drainage, contour trenches, planatation, gully plugging, organisation of local community and people's participation and *in situ* moisture conservation.

Grant of Industry status to news papers

*276. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Language Newspapers Association has urged Government to give the status of industry to newspapers;

(b) if so, the action taken by Government to grant the said status to the said organisations; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to implement the recomendations of the Ram Mohan Rao Committee?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Ministry of Industry has not received any such representation.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) 11 out of 12 recommendations of the Committee have been accepted by the Government. It has not been possible, however, to extend a special concessional rate of postal tariff.

MOU signed by Department of Public Enterprises with an Enterprise

*277. DR. B. B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an MOU is signed every year between Department of Public Enterprises and an Enterprise;

(b) if so, the details of the sets and achieved during 1996-97 particularly in power, oil sector and steel sector;

(c) whether the Goevrnment have set up any committee to review the functioning of MOU system.